

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02

SS-15 ICA-11 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /081 W

-----030984 161213Z /10

R 141536Z APR 78

FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 777

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE JERUSALEM 1092

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PBOR, IS, JO

SUBJ: JERUSALEM--ELECTIONS, PROJECTS AND PEACE

SUMMARY: JERUSALEM DEPUTY MAYOR BENVENISTI FEARS THAT TEDDY KOLLEK MAY WIN THE BATTLE FOR MAYOR, BUT LOSE THE WAR FOR CONTROL OF THE CITY UNLESS MODERATES CAN REGROUP TO FACE A LIKUD CHALLENGE. BOTTLENECKED LEGISLATION MAY, HOWEVER, FORCE A POSTPONEMENT IN ELECTIONS BEYOND NOVEMBER. BENVENISTI FEELS HE HAS WON HIS FIGHT TO BLOCK AN OVER-GRAND MAMILLA PROJECT. HE PLANS TO USE HIS ROCKEFELLER GRANT TO EVALUATE PRAGMATIC ARRANGEMENTS FOR A SOLUTION TO THE JERUSALEM QUESTION. END SUMMARY.

1. DPO AND POLOFF MET FOR AN HOUR WITH JERUSALEM DEPUTY MAYOR MERON BENVENISTI APRIL 14 SOON AFTER HIS RETURN FROM TWO MONTH FELLOWSHIP AT HARVARD.

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2. EARLIER THIS WEEK, BENVENISTI ANNOUNCED HE WOULD RUN FOR CITY COUNCIL INDEPENDENTLY OF MAYOR TEDDY KOLLEK'S PERSONAL LIST. BENVENISTI TOLD DPO HE BELIEVES KOLLEK HAS MADE A MISTAKE IN DIVORCING HIMSELF FROM THE ALIGNMENT. NEW PROCEDURES ALLOW SPLIT VOTES FOR MAYOR AND COUNCIL. SO ALTHOUGH KOLLEK WILL PROBABLY WIN, HE MAY WELL FIND HIMSELF FACING A LIKUD-DOMINATED

COUNCIL. ONE ALTERNATIVE, PREFERRED BY BENVENISTI, WOULD HAVE BEEN FOR KOLLEK TO WORK WITHIN THE ALIGNMENT AND WITH THE DMC BETTER TO INSURE A MODERATE MAJORITY. BENVENISTI FEARS THAT A LIKUD COUNCIL MIGHT NOT ONLY OBSTRUCT KOLLEK'S WORK, BUT BE IN A POSITION TO NAME THE NEXT MAYOR SHOULD KOLLEK'S FRUSTRATION LEAD TO RESIGNATION.

3. BENVENISTI, ALTHOUGH RECOGNIZING THAT ARAB POPULATION HAS TENDED TO STAY ALOOF FROM ELECTIONS, THINKS THAT IT COULD BE SIGNIFICANT FACTOR. HE ESTIMATES THAT 45,000 ELIGIBLE ARAB VOTERS REPRESENT ABOUT 1/3 OF ELECTORATE. IN CLOSE ELECTION, EVEN A FEW THOUSAND COULD MAKE AN IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE.

4. BENVENISTI FEELS NOVEMBER ELECTION DATE IS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN. MAJOR LEGISLATION TO REDEFINE POWERS OF THE MAYOR VIS A VIS COUNCIL HAS BEEN NECESSITATED BY CHANGES IN VOTING SYSTEM. MOREOVER, FINANCING MUST BE ARRANGED BY KNESSET FOR MUNICIPAL ELECTION, PREVIOUSLY HELD AND FINANCED IN CONJUNCTION WITH NATIONAL ELECTIONS, BENVENISTI WAS NOT SURE KNESSET COULD ACT ON ALL THIS PRIOR TO THE FALL.

5. BENVENISTI CLAIMED VICTORY IN HIS BATTLE TO SCALE DOWN THE SAFADI PROPOSAL FOR THE MAMILLA DISTRICT OF JERUSALEM. HE CITED KOLLEK'S STATEMENT IN THE "JERUSALEM POST," APRIL 14, THAT "PEOPLE SAY NOW THAT IT'S TOO COMPLICATED AND MONLITHIC." BENVENISTI ONLY TOOK EXCEPTION WITH THE WORD "NOW" SAYING HE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HAD SO ADVISED KOLLEK LAST JULY.

6. BENVENISTI SAID HE WAS CONSIDERING RELINQUISHING HIS ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES AS DEPUTY MAYOR FOR THREE MONTHS WHILE CONTINUING AS HEAD OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION TO ALLOW HIMSELF TO WORK WITH A ROCKEFELLER GRANT TO MEASURE SENSITIVITIES OF BOTH ARABS AND ISRAELIS TO PRACTICAL ISSUES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF JERUSALEM. AS AN EXAMPLE, HE CITED THE POSSIBLE LOCATION OF A DISTRICT COURT OF SOME FUTURE AUTONOMOUS WEST BANK IN JERUSALEM WHICH MIGHT YIELD GREAT SYMBOLIC BENEFIT FOR ARABS AT A MARGINAL COST FOR ISRAELIS. HE HOPES HIS "SENSITIVITY INDEX" WILL SUGGEST COMPROMISES LEADING TO A MODUS VIVENDI FOR JERUSALEM IN THE CONTEXT OF PEACE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MAYOR, ELECTION CANDIDATES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780163-0715
Format: TEL
From: JERUSALEM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780455/aaaabutn.tel
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Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Message ID: 3ea201b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Media Identifier:
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2964408
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: JERUSALEM--ELECTIONS, PROJECTS AND PEACE SUMMARY: JERUSALEM DEPUTY MAYOR BENVENISTI FEARS THAT TEDDY KOLLEK MAY WIN THE BATTLE FOR MAYOR, BUT LOS
TAGS: PINT, PBOR, IS, JO, (KOLLEK, TEDDY)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3ea201b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014